

## Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle

(*Desmoceros californicus dimorphus*)

Status -- Federal: Threatened; California: None



elderberry plant



female

male

Photos: Tad Gantenbein



exit  
hole

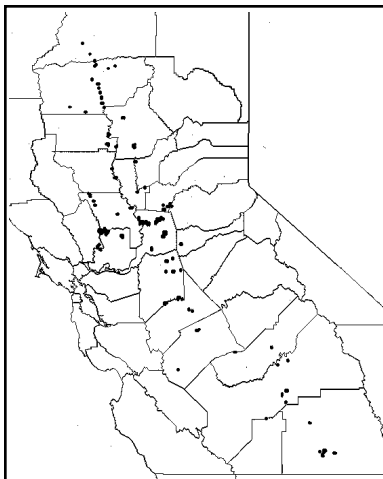
The Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle is an insect subspecies endemic to the Central Valley of California, and is found in riparian habitats and associated upland habitats where elderberry (*Sambucus sp.*) the beetle's foodplant grows. After mating, females lay their eggs in crevices in the elderberry bark. In about 10 days, when the eggs hatch, the larvae bore into the pith, where they feed and mature for 1 or 2 years by tunneling through the spongy pith of the large stems, trunks and roots of the elderberry. After pupation, they emerge as brightly colored adults, through distinctive, oval-shaped exit holes they chew through the bark.



California Department of Pesticide Regulation  
Endangered Species Project

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Data from CDFG Natural Diversity Data Base, 1996

### Biology

The valley elderberry long-horn beetle depends on the elderberry tree in every phase of its life cycle.

As elderberry trees begin flowering in spring, these beetles begin to emerge from their tunnels bored through the trees' pith; roaming the trees until late June, eating foliage and possibly flowers; until they mate.

### Characteristics

The bodies of full-grown beetles are about 3/4 in. (2 cm.) long. Females are larger than males, both have a bright red color on their wings. The forewings of the females are always dark metallic green with flame trimmings; the male's forewings can

be similar to those of the female or red black with dark green spots. The name "longhorn" refers to its prominent, segmented antennae.

Given its small size (less than one inch), it is often easier to locate the beetle's characteristic exit hole -an oval shaped opening-, usually less than 1/2 inch wide and bored through bark not far above ground level.

**Distribution:** The clearing of riparian vegetation for agricultural and urban development during the last 150 years impacted the beetle's distribution significantly. Current records from the Department of Fish and Game's Natural Diversity Data Base show scattered locations for the valley elderberry longhorn beetle throughout its historical range, from Redding in Shasta County to Bakersfield in Kern County (see map). However, in surveys conducted from 1984 thru 1991, only 12 patches of natural riparian forests along the Sacramento, American, and San Joaquin rivers and their tributaries yielded either beetles or emergence holes indicating their presence